

■ THE 103RD INFANTRY VETERANS' ASSOCIATION OF WORLD WAR I holds its reunion every year on the anniversary of the gas attack at Apremont, France, which occurred on May 10, 1918.

The citizen-soldiers from Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Massachusetts lost heavily that day, but they did not panic as the Germans had predicted. They were able to stop the German attackers with heavy fire from their thinly held front lines.

Remembering back 48 years is not an easy feat. As we sat around the lobby of the Augusta House last May, the little group of survivors spoke only in monosyllables of an event that brought sorrow to many a hill farm in New England.

The regiment had Indians from Old Town, Maine; French Canadian lumberjacks; Yankee farmers from the hills of Vermont and from the potato fields of Aroostook County, Maine; and kids from everywhere. Yes, there was a generous sprinkling of boys who lied about their age to get in. The Myshrahl boys couldn't have been 16, and some looked like Civil War drummer boys.

Today this gas attack—the last big one of the war— is only a memory.

The A-bomb, if not more barbarous, is certainly more efficient. Apremont marked the last time that the Germans used a widespread gas attack in World War I, probably because they discovered that it didn't pay. Too many of their own men succumbed, and they found, too, that the Yankee character was not one that easily panicked in an emergency, as had some of their opponents when subjected to the same test.

The first battalion, comprised of four companies totalling about a thousand men, was holding the front lines that night. This particular stretch of No Man's Land was like a scene from Dante's Inferno. For several years this sector had been the jumping-off place for some of those great French attacks under Petain, with masses of artillery blowing the terrain into shreds. (cont. on page 130)



300th Anniversary of a House

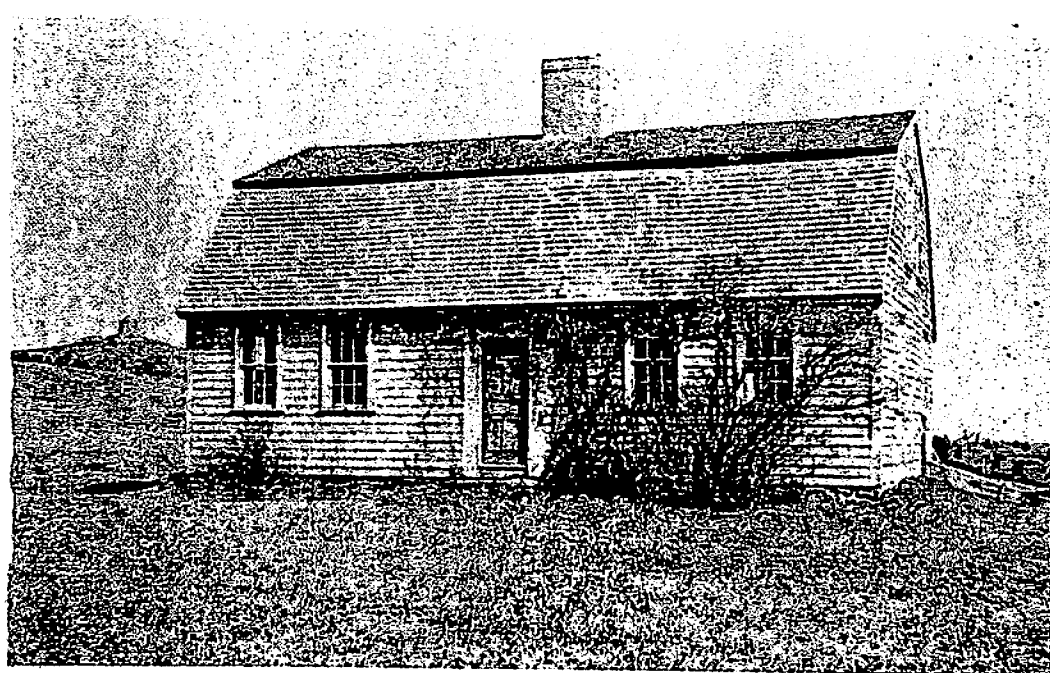
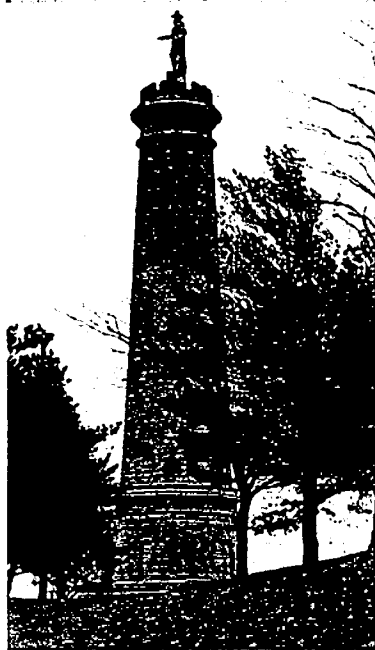
by FRANCIS L. BARTON

■ ON SEPTEMBER 12, 1960, DOROTHY PATTEN was expecting guests for lunch. During the previous evening there had been regular reports of a hurricane which was headed toward the New England coast, and now the boughs of oak trees outside the windows tossed, and red cedars twisted in the wind. A little after noon, she saw her guests coming up from the shore, Mrs. Richard Spindler and her two young sons, wearing raincoats and sou'wester hats. Light rain was falling. The Spindlers had rented a cottage on the beach for the summer season. Mother and sons came in and took off their wet things.

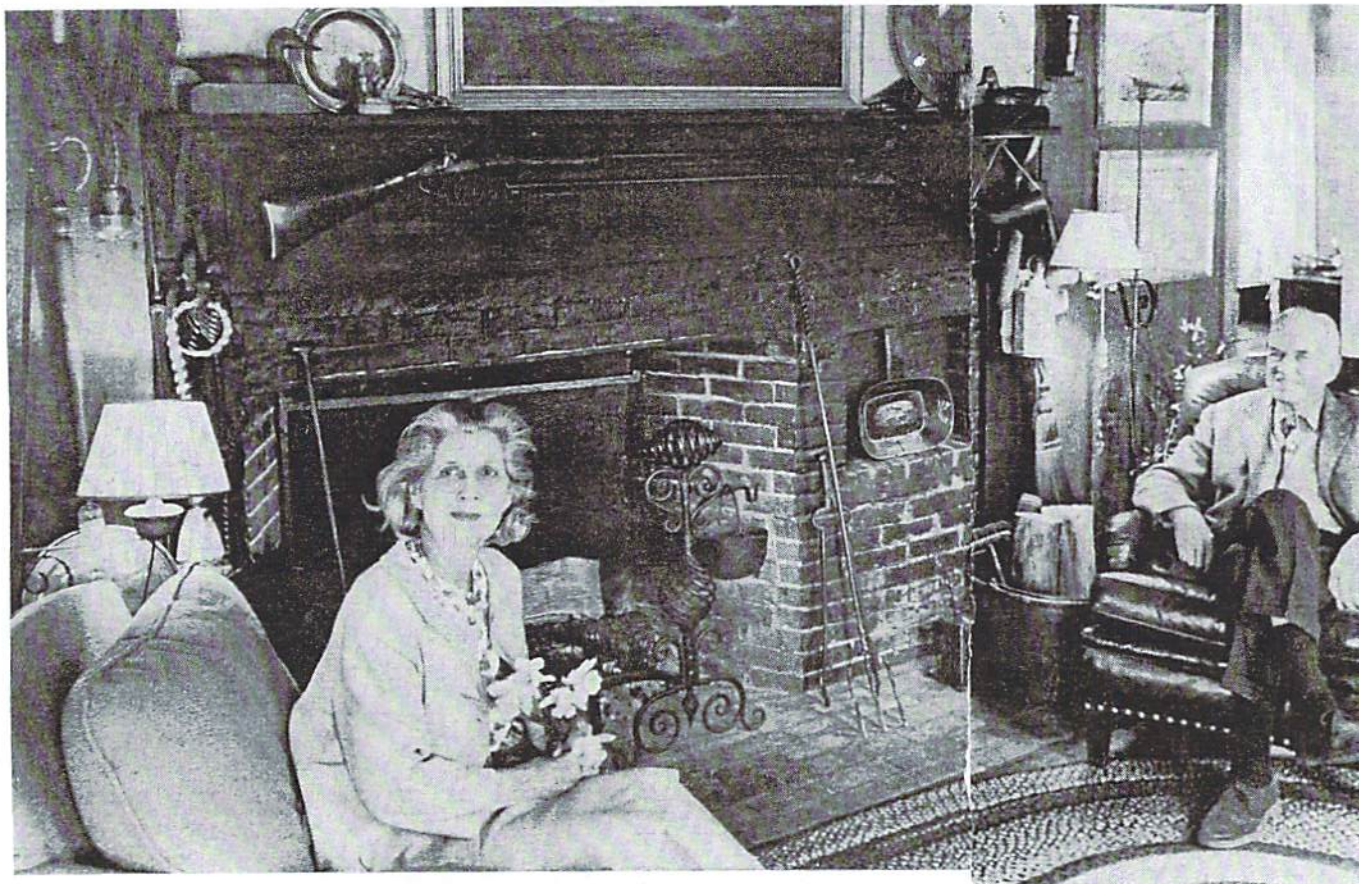
The boys were full of what they had seen from their cottage windows—great waves breaking on the shore.

"It's peaceful here," Mrs. Spindler said.

After lunch the two women sat in the quiet living room. It was still blowing hard outside, but the house did not creak or tremble. It was anchored by the central chimney, off which four fireplaces opened into the surrounding rooms. In the corners of the living room, and overhead, supporting the second story, were the original oak beams cut from the wilderness. They had turned a brownish-black, like old iron, and



The Alexander Standish house today and in 1876 (top). Note the Standish monument (top, left photo) is shown under construction in the 1876 photo.



At left, Mr. & Mrs. David Patten (the owners) in the former kitchen of the Alexander Standish House. Nearby is the cellar hole, bottom, of the Myles Standish House. Below, Myles is depicted in this same house stirring punch with his sword.



were very hard. It was easy to understand why the house was a firm refuge.

David Patten came up from the shore. He stood by the door, taking off his wet foul-weather gear.

"What do you think of the hurricane?" he asked.

"What hurricane?"

"In case you don't know it, we're in the midst of one right now, and we've lost 50 feet of beach."

The house owned by Dorothy and David Patten on Goose Point in Duxbury, Massachusetts, is 300 years old this year. It stands on land originally assigned to Myles Standish by the Plymouth colony, and was built for Alexander Standish, his oldest son.

The history of the house can be said to begin in 1584. In that year a son was born into the Standish family, in the village of Chorley, in *(continued on page 144)*

300TH ANNIVERSARY OF A HOUSE

(continued from page 103)

Lancashire. The boy was christened Myles, and his name was undoubtedly entered in the parish register.

The Standishes, who were landed gentry, had divided into a Protestant and a Catholic branch. The seat of the Protestant branch was called Duxbury Hall, and it was to this division of the family that Myles Standish belonged.

Some time after the birth of Myles, the parish register at Chorley was defaced, apparently by the application of pumice stone. Many of the entries for 1584 and 1585 were made illegible. The matter has been investigated by British and American scholars, and there is a fairly wide agreement that the obliteration of the record was part of a successful scheme to deprive Myles of his just inheritance.

We know that Myles carried with him to the New World a conviction that he had been wronged. In his will he bequeathed to his "son and heire all my land as heire apparent by lawful decent (sic) in Ormstead, Borsconge, Wrightington, Maudsley, Newburrow, Cranston and the Isle of Man . . . surreptitiously detained from me . . ."

He entered the army and fought against the Duke of Alba in the Netherlands. With the coming of peace in 1609, he remained in Holland with his regiment. In Leyden, he made friends with a group of expatriate Separatists, who later became known as the Pilgrims.

Myles Standish was the only military man in the group of English settlers who arrived in Plymouth, Massachusetts in 1620. He was

their commander until his death in 1655.

During the great sickness of the Winter of 1620-21, Myles remained able-bodied. In his *History of Plimoth Plantation*, Bradford wrote:

"... in time of most distress there was about 6 or 7 sound persons, who, to their great commendations be it spoken, spared no pains, night or day, but with abundance of toyle and hazard to their owne health, fetched them wood, made them fires, drest them meat, made their beads, washed their loathsome clothes, clothed and unclothed them; in a word, did all the homly and necessarie offices for them which dainty and quessie stomachs cannot endure to hear named; and all this willingly and cheerfully . . ."

Rose Standish, the captain's wife, was one of the first to die. Barbara, his second wife, tradition says, was a sister of Rose and came from England to marry him.

"The Courtship of Myles Standish," in which Longfellow describes a bashful and rough military man, too unsure of himself to ask the young Priscilla Mullins to marry him, is regarded by historians as pure fiction.

The country around Plymouth had been depopulated of Indians by a plague, but some nearby tribes, notably the Narragansetts, remained largely free from disease. Justin Winsor, the Massachusetts historian, estimates that in 1620, between 15 and 20 thousand Indians were living within 40 miles of Plymouth. At all costs it was necessary to maintain respect for the English and their firearms. English prestige was threatened during the Winter of 1622-23 by the expedition sent out under the sponsorship of Thomas Weston, an adventurer and speculator. Weston's men had their headquarters at Wessagusset, now Weymouth, on Boston bay.

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Weston's men, recruited partly from the London slums, were totally unprepared for the wilderness. They were threatened with starvation and, to keep alive, some of them became servants of the Massachusetts braves. They stole from the Indians, and the Indians stole from them or openly appropriated their food. The Massachusetts Indians formed a plot to wipe out the Wessagusset settlement and enlisted some of the surrounding tribes.

When the nature of the plot became unmistakable, Standish and the Plymouth elders decided to act first. In early April, 1623, with eight of his men and the friendly Indian, Hobbomak, Standish went to Wessagusset by boat. There he was insulted by Wituwamat and Pecksuot, two braves of great size and strength. What happened next is told by the historian, Charles F. Adams.

"The next day Pecksuot and Wituwamat, accompanied by two savages . . . again came to the stockade, and were permitted to enter the principal block-house. Standish was there with some four or five of his company . . . Watching his chance . . . with a stealth that exceeded that of the savages, Standish suddenly giving the signal, sprang upon Pecksuot . . . It was a short fierce death-grapple. Standish had snatched the knife at Pecksuot's neck from its sheath and driven it into him."

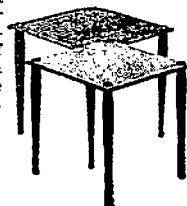
The killing of Pecksuot with his own knife by Standish made him greatly feared by the Indians. After extinguishing the plot which centered at Wessagusset, he did not take another Indian life.

It seems obvious that Standish, better than any other man at Plymouth, understood the Indian braves. At an early date he could speak their difficult language.

The land to the south and west of Plymouth was barren, but fertile land lay to the north. Possibly as early as 1628, Myles

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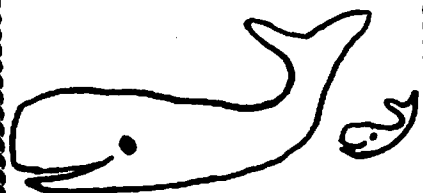
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and his second wife were spending the Summer on a wooded point of land opposite Plymouth. About 1632, they moved there permanently. They were awarded 100 acres and this was later expanded by 20 more. It was, and still is, a fine piece of real estate. It included a clear spring, two ponds, upland for pasture, and gently sloping, rich land for cultivation. The land included part of a hill which ever since has been called "Captain's Hill." It was agreed that in case of trouble with the Indians, a beacon should be lighted on the top. This is where the Standish monument now stands.

Perhaps it seemed to Myles that the Good Lord had rewarded him for his long and faithful service by giving him a new Duxbury. There is a strong tradition that he named his farm for the lost estate. Soon the whole new settlement was called Duxbury or Duxburrow (the name appears on old documents with a variety of spellings).

In his house on the point, with his wife and children, Myles passed the last quarter century of his life. Four of his seven children survived him. In a touching and thoughtful will, he requests that if he "die at Duxburrow" his body be laid "as conveniently as may be to my two dear daughters, Lora Standish . . . and Mary Standish, my daughter-in-law."

In 1665, 10 years after the death of Myles, his house burned to the ground, and a few months later, in 1666, Alexander built his house. Justin Winsor writes that in his day, that is the middle and end of the last century, there was a tradition that some of the latches and hinges in the Alexander Standish house came from the original dwelling.

About Alexander we know little. His first wife was Sarah, daughter of John and Priscilla Mullins Alden. They had seven children. By his second wife, Desire, he had four more. He served as town clerk of Duxbury, and his name appears on documents. In his will he left his wife: "ye keeping of three cows and twelve sheep to be wintered and pastured whilest she remains a widow, and also ye use of ye best room . . . and wood for her burning brought to her door."

During the 18th and early 19th Centuries, there was little interest in the Pilgrim Fathers. The old Duxbury graveyard was overrun by cattle and many of the stones

were covered by sand. The armor of Myles Standish was allowed to rust away to nothing in a Plympton barn. Longfellow, though he did not follow historical records, made the name of Myles Standish known throughout the United States.

To reconstruct the Duxbury past we have to rely partly on tradition, but in certain families tradition was strong. Justin Winsor writes that in 1850 about half the people in Duxbury were descended from passengers on the *Mayflower*. It was through judging correctly which traditions to credit and which to discount, that the Rev. E. J. V. Huiginn was able in 1889 to discover the grave of Myles Standish. He lay, as he had wished, beside Mary and Lora. The skeleton gave evidence of great physical strength.

By 1870 there was enough interest in Myles so that a considerable sum could be raised for a monument. On October 7, 1872, the cornerstone was laid. After a lunch at the Alexander Standish house, the dignitaries proceeded to the hill. From the surrounding towns, 10 thousand people had gathered. The spectators proved that they were the hardy descendants of hardy pioneers by listening for a couple of hours to the kind of oratory then in vogue. The monument was not completed until 1898.

On his monument, Myles Standish dominates Duxbury. As you drive down the southeast expressway, the tall shaft comes into view. As you walk on the golf course, and in many parts of the village, the monument becomes suddenly visible. Myles is depicted in typical Pilgrim clothing, and one hand is held out toward the east.

Without him the colony at Plymouth would probably have been destroyed by Indians.

David Patten, a veteran of two World Wars, naval officer on General MacArthur's staff, and Chief Marshall of the Duxbury Tercentenary Committee of 1937, is in a position to understand the importance of military men in times of crisis and the worth of old houses. The Pattens have renovated the house without destroying its old features and have placed it in excellent condition. For a long time Myles Standish should be able to stretch out his hand over his New World Duxbury and over the cottage built by his son.



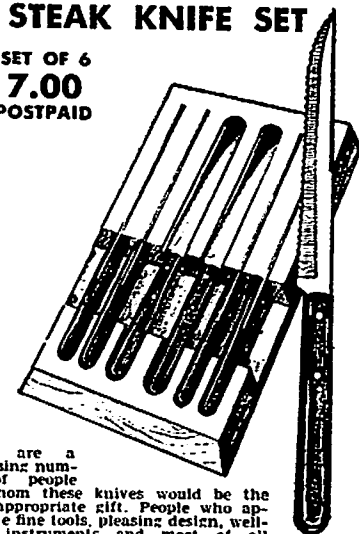
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